



**March 1, 2011 Public Hearing Testimony before the
Connecticut General Assembly Select Committee on Children**

**Raised Bill No. 6430:
AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN AND THE RECESSION**

Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members:

My name is Edith Pollock Karsky. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA), which is the state association for Connecticut's twelve Community Action Agencies. CAAs are the not-for-profit agencies designated by the state and federal governments as their official partners in helping families to avoid financial crisis, and empowering them with job training, child care, and other vital supports to regain their financial footing if they do experience poverty. We administer benefit programs to more than 300,000 people annually, empowering families and strengthening communities in every Connecticut city and town.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Raised Bill No. 6430: AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN AND THE RECESSION, and in support of adding provisions to the bill in keeping with the General Assembly's commitment to ensuring that every child in Connecticut has the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential.

As a network held to high standards of accountability through the federal government's Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) system, we applaud the Committee's commitment to Results-Based Accountability (RBA). We respectfully request that the Committee consider additional concepts, including the following.

- Our network is an integrated, flexible social service delivery infrastructure. Explore additional ways to optimize our one-stop services for families in need.
- Include CAA and other stakeholder input in broad, cross-agency goal setting.
- Allow CAAs, authorized to determine eligibility for Head Start and for energy assistance benefits, to grant provisional or presumptive eligibility to families and individuals applying to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Consider an 8% statewide (and/or 25% local) unemployment mark that would trigger utility companies serving negatively impacted customers to remove from a customer's energy bill any amount that has been used successfully in a Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) hearing for a rate increase, and deduct from the bill any amount the company has received from the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP).

Our network is eager to partner with the State to ensure that families facing especially difficult times have appropriate access to services that help them get back on their feet. Together, we can avoid damaging human and fiscal costs, and shape a future worthy of our children. Again, thank you. I would be happy to take your questions.